IV

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

• I HE two great problems of policy that confronted the new administration were those of civil-service reform and a readjustment in the South. Mr. Schurz had much practical knowledge of the Southern problem, but only slight responsibility in the efforts to solve it. He had heartily approved Mr. Hayes' purpose to abandon South Carolina and Louisiana to the whites; but he had felt and expressed much doubt as to the outcome of the President's project—especially exhibited in the appointment of Key—to build up a respectable white Republican party in the South.

As to the policy of civil-service reform, Mr. Schurz was recognized on all sides as the specialist of the administration. In his own department he promptly furnished practical illustrations of the new system. The bureau chiefs and other principal subordinates were all required to submit to him full projects for the application of the merit system in the appointment and promotion of the clerical force. Starting with these wholly practical suggestions, he worked out his plan and put it into operation. Competitive examinations were provided for as the sole channel for entrance into the service; and he announced that promotion in rank and salary should depend upon like tests, together with a comparison of records as to efficiency.

This was indeed something new—so new and apparently

idealistic that the politicians looked upon it as a huge, unpractical joke, and so extremely absurd that they had to hold their sides as they laughed. Finally, recovering that distinguished